

IV. Remarks

Claims 1-8 were pending in this application and have been rejected. The present amendment cancels claims 2 and 4, adds claim 9 and amends claims 1, 3 and 5 to more particularly point out and clarify Applicants' invention. No new matter has been added by the present amendment. After this amendment, claims 1, 3 and 5-9 will be pending.

Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 2-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regards as their invention. Claims 2 and 4 have been cancelled by the present amendment and therefore, the rejections of claims 2 and 4 are now moot. In view of the amendments and remarks contained herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 3 and 5 are traversed.

Claim 3 has been amended to recite that the projection is provided on a front side of the one of the belt spool shaft or the profile head. This amendment was in response to an objection that "the front side" recited in claim 3 lacked antecedent basis.

Claim 5 has been amended to recite that the clamping ring in the unassembled condition is in the form of a flat disc. This amendment was in response to an objection

that claim 5 is unclear or inaccurate because Figure 3 shows the clamping ring as not being flat in the assembled state.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that the amendments discussed in the foregoing paragraphs have cured the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejections of claims 3 and 5.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,354,528 issued to Nagata, et al. ("Nagata"). Claims 2 and 4 have been cancelled by the present amendment and therefore, the rejections of claims 2 and 4 are now moot. In view of the amendments and remarks contained herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 1, 3 and 7 are traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the clamping ring in an unassembled condition has a first outer diameter that is larger than a first internal diameter of the recess and a second internal diameter that is smaller than a second outer diameter of the projection. The clamping ring can be pushed onto the projection about the second outer diameter and laid in the recess along the first internal diameter so as to deflect the clamping ring to the assembled condition where the clamping ring frictionally engages both the projection and an inner wall of the recess. Support for this amendment may be found in Applicants' application at paragraphs [0007]-[0010].

Nagata discloses a seat belt webbing retractor 10 comprising a spool 70 as a take-up shaft arranged within a frame 20. The spool 70 is formed by a spool shaft 70A and a pair of outer flanges 70B and 70C. A shaft insertion hole 72 is formed in the shaft core portion of the spool shaft 70A, and a torsion shaft 92 is inserted therein. On the flange portion 70B side in the shaft insertion hole 72, there is formed a lock base receiving portion 80 in a recessed form having a larger diameter than that of the shaft insertion hole 72. The lock base receiving portion 80 is structured by a recess body 80A for attaching a lock base 82. The Examiner has suggested that recess body 80A and lock base 82 are analogous to Applicants' claimed "recess" and "profile head", respectively.

As shown in Figures 7-9, in an intermediate portion of the recess body 80A in the spool shaft 70A, there is formed a stopper insertion groove 86 (most analogous to Applicants' claimed "recess having a first internal diameter"), into which a stopper 84 is inserted. The stopper insertion groove 86 comprises a top mounting groove 86A and a pair of leg insertion grooves 86B formed orthogonal to the top mounting groove 86A and parallel to each other. Corresponding thereto, an annular groove 88 is formed at a position facing the pair of leg insertion grooves 86B, in an intermediate of the base portion 82A in the lock base 82. The Examiner has suggested that the base portion 82A is analogous to Applicants' claimed "projection" and accordingly, the annular groove 88 is most analogous to Applicants' claimed "projection having a second outer diameter".

The stopper 84 is inserted into the stopper insertion groove 86 and the annular groove 88, and has a substantially in a U-shaped form. As shown in Figure 10, the stopper 84 comprises a top portion 84A, and a pair of leg portions 84B hanging in

parallel from both sides of the top portion 84A. The dimension of the leg portion 84B of the stopper 84 in the width direction is set to be substantially the same dimension as the groove width of the leg insertion groove 86B and the annular groove 88. Since the pair of the leg portions 84B of the stopper 84 are inserted in between the leg insertion groove 86B of the spool shaft 70A and the annular groove 88 of the lock base 82 looseness in both the axial direction and the radial direction is eliminated such that the lock base 82 is prevented from coming off from the spool shaft 70A. *Nagata* at Col. 18, line 20 – Col. 19, line 42. Notably, the stopper 84 has a U-shaped form with two parallel legs projecting orthogonally from the top portion and therefore, is not a ring which is inherently circular in form. Moreover, the stopper's outer and inner dimensions are correspondingly the same as the inner and outer dimensions of the stopper insert groove 86 and the annular groove 88, respectively, for both the unassembled and assembled conditions, and accordingly, is not deflected to the assembled condition to frictionally engage portions of the spool shaft 70A and the lock base 82.

This is unlike Applicants' invention as recited in claim 1 where the clamping ring in an unassembled condition has a first outer diameter that is larger than a first internal diameter of the recess and a second internal diameter that is smaller than a second outer diameter of the projection, and the clamping ring can be pushed onto the projection about the second outer diameter and laid in the recess along the first internal diameter so as to deflect the clamping ring to the assembled condition where the clamping ring frictionally engages both the projection and an inner wall of the recess. In that *Nagata* lacks the noted elements of claim 1, the rejections based thereon should be withdrawn. Accordingly, Applicants believe that claim 1 and its dependent claims 3 and 7 are in a condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagata in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,779,659 issued to Habert ("Habert"). In view of the amendments and remarks contained herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 5 and 6 are traversed.

Since claims 5 and 6 depend from claim 1 and since Habert fails to disclose a clamping ring in an unassembled condition having a first outer diameter that is larger than a first internal diameter of the recess and a second internal diameter that is smaller than a second outer diameter of the projection, and the clamping ring can be pushed onto the projection about the second outer diameter and laid in the recess along the first internal diameter so as to deflect the clamping ring to the assembled condition where the clamping ring frictionally engages both the projection and an inner wall of the recess, the combination of Nagata and Habert cannot render the claims of the present invention as obvious. The rejections under section 103(a) are therefore improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagata in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,033,622 issued to Renner ("Renner"). In view of the amendments and remarks contained herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claim 8 is traversed.

Since claim 8 depends from claim 1 and since Renner fails to disclose a clamping ring in an unassembled condition having a first outer diameter that is larger than a first internal diameter of the recess and a second internal diameter that is smaller than a second outer diameter of the projection, and the clamping ring can be pushed

onto the projection about the second outer diameter and laid in the recess along the first internal diameter so as to deflect the clamping ring to the assembled condition where the clamping ring frictionally engages both the projection and an inner wall of the recess, the combination of Nagata and Renner cannot render the claim of the present invention as obvious. The rejection under section 103(a) is therefore improper and should be withdrawn.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that claims 5-6 and 8 are in a condition for allowance.

Claim 9 has been added by the present amendment and is believed to be patentable not only because it depends from claim 1 but also for its own specific elements recited therein.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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